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CLAIMS:

- 1) A computer readable storage medium containing a program element for execution by a CPU, said program element comprising:
- 5 a) a first program component for causing a computer to deliver first information to a user, the first information prompting the user to enter at the computer information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
 - 10 b) a second program component for receiving information about a basic pool of railcars, said second program component implementing a filter for filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars, said second program component causing the computer to deliver second information to the user, the second information prompting the user to select at the computer one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
 - 15 c) a third program element for computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
 - i) the rail transportation service;
 - ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.
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- 2) A method for computing the price for shipping goods, comprising:
- a) causing a computer to deliver first information to a user, the first information prompting the user to enter at the computer information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
 - 25 b) receiving information about a basic pool of railcars and filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars;
 - c) causing the computer to deliver second information to the user, the second information prompting the user to select at the computer one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
 - 30 d) computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
 - i) the rail transportation service;

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ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.

3) A method for requesting a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, comprising:

- 5 a) displaying information at a client system prompting a user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
- b) displaying information at the client system prompting the user to enter at the client system one or more filtering criteria;
- 10 c) sending to a server system the information about the rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
- d) sending to the server system the one or more filtering criteria;
- e) receiving at the client system from the server system information about a filtered pool of rail cars produced by filtering a basic pool of rail cars on the basis of the one or more filtering criteria;
- 15 f) displaying at the client system information to the user prompting the user to select at the client system one or more rail cars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of the goods;
- g) sending to the server system the information about the one or more rail cars selected by the user for the shipment of the goods;
- 20 h) receiving at the client system from the server system information about the price for the shipment of the goods;
- i) displaying to the user at the client system the information about the price for the shipment of the goods.

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4) A server system for computing a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, said server system containing a program element for execution by a CPU, said program element comprising:

- a) a first program component for causing a client system to deliver first information to a user, the first information prompting the user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
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- 5 b) a second program component for receiving information about a basic pool of railcars, said second program component implementing a filter for filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars, said second program component causing the client system to deliver second information to the user, the second information prompting the user to select at the client system one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
- c) a third program element for computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
- 10 i) the rail transportation service;
- ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.
- 15 5) A client-server system for computing a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, comprising:
- a) a client system;
- b) a server system, said client system and said server system operative to exchange messages over a data network;
- 20 c) a first program component for execution on said server system for sending messages to said client system causing said client system to deliver information prompting the user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
- d) a second program component for execution on said server system for receiving information about a basic pool of railcars, said second program component implementing a filter for filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars, said second program component sending messages to said client system causing said client system to deliver information to the user prompting the user to select at said client system one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
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- e) said client system being operative to send to said server system messages to communicate to said server the information about the rail transportation service entered by the user and the one or more rail cars selected by the user;
- f) a third program element executed at said server system for computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
 - i) the rail transportation service;
 - ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.

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